



November 1989
The Occasion Station

**Frederick Law Olmsted's
 1913 Ypsi railroad plan**

**Festival of Lights
 Heritage Fest reforms**

DTA Questionnaire
 ... and other strictly local stuff

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Engine Clubbers rebuild Plaza's farm wagon . . .

The outgoing president of the Depot Town Antique Engine Club returned to the old neighborhood on October 6 with 'a bunch of the guys' and the Market Plaza's farm wagon is the better for it. Charlie Goff organized five of the Club's men members and they followed the work that the Engineering Society's Shena Thomas started last August.

After Shena's painting was dry on the spokes of the old wagon wheels, it still needed a new top bed for sitting, meeting, stacking and jumping on. That's where the Engine Clubbers came in. Along with Charlie were Ivan Zeeb, Bill Graff, Bill Hansen and Bob Kruse with their saws, hammers and paint brushes.

Carrol Osborn drew up the specifications for the job early in the summer, and it just took the DTAEC gang a little longer to step in and do their part. It's no wonder, either, since the Club uses the Caboose for its Board Meetings, the Freighthouse Coffeeshop for it's monthly membership meetings, and the Plaza for numerous exhibitions of their iron each year.

... and elect officers

Newly elected to run the business of DTAEC, one of the district's most active groups, are: Ron Bracken-president, Louis Fisher-vice-president, Mary Bracken-treasurer, and Charlie Goff-secretary. Board of directors for the coming year include Bill Kasper, Bob Kruse, Ken York, Olie Olsen and Ivan Zeeb.

Anyone interested in restoring and showing antique gas or steam engines is invited to attend the monthly meetings on the fourth Thursday at 7:00 pm in the Freighthouse Coffeeshop.

**Depot Town's
 holiday building lights
 go on November 18th.**

Victorian Holiday plans forming

One of the loveliest celebrations in the area is coming together for the seventh time in as many years. Although Charles Dickens never came to Depot Town - and didn't like this country very much anyway - his spirit of the season is carried on in and around these old buildings of the period with faithful attention to Victorian ethic and style.

Sunday, December 10, will mark the kickoff of Depot Town merchants' Victorian Holiday which continues through the New Year and runs concurrently with Riverside Park's fourth Festival of Lights.

Last year's light show drew nearly 150,000 people during its run and most of them stopped

off for dinner and drinks in Depot Town.

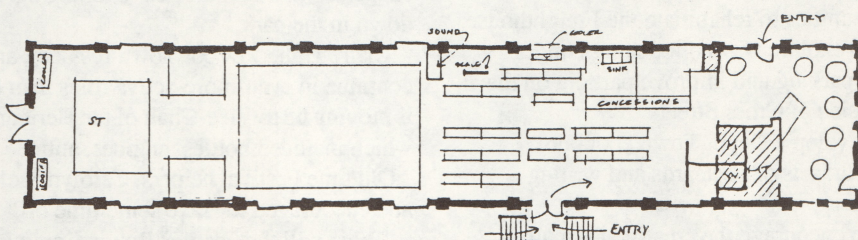
Sally Richie, of Miller's Ice Cream Parlor, and Joe Wizauer, of Hon's Flowers & Fancies, are acting as co-chairs again, and will soon have a brochure available at all participating shops announcing the many events of the day.

A window decorating theme, open houses, a concert by Our Lady's Madrigal Singers and more traditions of the season will be featured.

New to this year's event will be horse-drawn wagon rides from Depot Town to the Historical Museum's open house - and back.

A recipe book of last year's prize-winning baking contest entries also will be featured.

**11 - 7, Sunday,
 December 10th**



Freighthouse interior plan from a past issue of The Rag

Freighthouse Master Plan falls short of original goal

After steering a \$20,000 grant away from the holiday lighting program and into the Freighthouse dock, Depot Town merchants are among the rest of the populace left standing outside in the cold. Newly enforced regulations from the City Building Department have left the City and the Market budget far short of the necessary improvements to open the facility to any large scale events other than the twice-a-week Farmers' Market.

A letter to the City announcing the intention of the Depot Town Association to reinstitute the Winter Jazz Series goes unanswered, officially, but several downtown and Depot Town meetings in the last month indicate that new exits, ramps and emergency lighting will not be forthcoming from this year's City budget. In a meeting with City Manager, Bob Slone, DTA learned that the children's Hallowe'en Party will be the only such event this year due, mostly, to the fact that it's a not-for-profit event which has enjoyed a long tradition of good works for the kids of the community. Jazz events for adults, it seems, are not held in the same esteem and are not part of the plan for this winter's activities.

Many of the suggestions made by members of the community to the Market's architects last year have been implemented, but recent upgrades on the part of the City for its own facility preclude the district using it as Ypsilanti's version of Cobo Hall for quite some time.

Miller's Ice Cream becomes The Occasion Station

After eight years as the reincarnation of the old neighborhood ice cream parlor, Miller's Ice Cream Parlor will undergo yet another image change. Following continual updating, improvement and expansion in their Depot Town location, Sally and Rex Richie's favorite historical business endeavor will hereafter be known as The Occasion Station - with the same excellent Miller's Ice Cream - augmented by a creative and exciting line of gifts.

The addition to this successful enterprise will include greeting cards from Chicago's Recycled Paper Products, gifts, candy, mylar balloons, gift wrap and mugs.

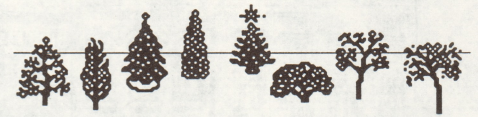
"We're still offering carry-out service in front and sit-down service in the back," says Sally, "but the center area will be jam-packed

with unique gift ideas"

"We intend to follow a long line of successful gift emporia in the district," adds Rex. "Some of them have been our tenants, and just about all of them moved on to bigger and better things after their Depot Town experience."



Beginning with the old sundries and dime store in the east end of the Old Town Restaurant, the tradition continued through the Old Town Bazaar of the '60s, then, Rosemary's Corner, When in Doubt, the Cricket Box, Grand Trunk Ltd., and Peddlers Path. The gift shop market has been missed for more than a year, now. The Richie's new addition opens on Saturday, November-4, just in time for the annual Victorian Holiday celebration.



Festival of Lights returns to Riverside Park November 19- January 1

After an October 15 "You Light Up My Life" bulb-stringing session at the Recreation Park Senior Citizens' Center, Ruth Ann Jamnick, co-chair of this year's event, said she doubted that the fuss over the Pizza Farm's holiday display in Ann Arbor Township would have any effect upon the number touring Ypsilanti's spectacular light show.

President Paul's Priorities

[After the October DTA meeting, newly elected president, Paul Feters, presented the following list of objectives for the year.]

- To involve (or re-involve) building owners, merchants, neighbors, -friendly or not - in the work of the Association.
- Develop a complete district, 2-mill Ad Valorem tax, and Tax Increment Financing .
- See a solution to the dumpster problem.
- Support the Ypsilanti Recycling Center in any way we can.
- Work with the City to develop opportunities to rehabilitate the Freighthouse.
- To explore ways of opening Ninde Street parking and improve parking on the south side of Cross Street.
- Develop a Depot Town cookbook, calendar, sets of postcards and writing stationery.
- To encourage the creative journalistic fervor of the Depot Town Rag and encourage other numbers of advertising brochures.

RAG READER REPORT

Please check those which apply. Do you:

- ☐ Read *The Rag* on a monthly basis?
 - ☐ Get *The Rag* in the mail?
 - ☐ Pick up *The Rag* in local businesses?
 - ☐ Attend Winter Jazz Series?
 - ☐ Attend Frog Island Jazz Festival?
 - ☐ Attend Heritage Jazz Competition?
 - ☐ Volunteer your services to the block?
 - ☐ Want to advertise in *The Rag*?
 - ☐ Need more information about Depot Town or any of its many organizations?
- Please return questionnaire to The Old Caboose, DTA, 400 Market Pl, Ypsilanti.

Diane Kerr to chair 1990 Heritage Fest

Depot Town merchants, property owners and one of the largest groups of organized volunteers in the area are still meeting over what to do differently at next August's Ypsilanti Heritage Festival. In the midst of much local second-guessing, the Festival Policy Committee held its follow-up meeting on Thursday, October 12 and elected Michigan Avenue Dairy Queen owner, Diane Kerr, to chair the 1990 Festival.

Several Depot Towners showed up to hear the final reports where 1989 chair, Ron Miller, claimed that the Festival made \$18,000 this year. The only other figures available were those of the DTA beer tent which was held down in Riverside Park with the country-and-big-band music tent. After paying off their bill from the previous year's expenses, the Association wonders at the viability of hosting the Heritage Jazz Competition back in the railroad district in 1990. Some have suggested that DTA return to taking the major financial risk and leave the other entertainments down in the park.

Claire Hall, a Depot Town resident, and Jack Miller, of the famous Hudson dealership, will continue in even-more-active roles than before. After co-chairing the food concessions, Claire is moving up to Vice-Chair of the Heritage Fest and Jack will continue to coordinate the exhibits, which included bottles, engines, antique autos, tractors, pedal-pull, dolls and more last year.

Old time Festival helpers, Carolyn McKeever and Tom Dodd, were retired by the new regime and encouraged to "take some time off" for the next celebration.

"What will the Festival Policy Committee do without Carolyn and Tom?" one of the folks on the block asked.

"Anything they want," seemed to be the most appropriate reply. Last year's planning was anything but easy, and their input certainly made it harder for everyone else. They seemed to be part of almost every problem faced by the Policy group: the Jazz Competition, the beer tent, parking on Frog Island, the location of the opening party, the publication of the program and more.

Anyone wishing to step in and continue working for the entire area in Depot Town's name is welcome to fill the holes left by these old regulars. No retirement parties are planned.

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D. D. A.

The Depot Town Development Authority was reorganized in February of this year with River Artworks' Paul Feters as chair. Since that time, Feters has also been elected president of the Depot Town Association. Just to keep his duties straight in the eyes and agenda of his constituency, here is a bird's-eye view of the DDA's current program of development:

1. **Solidify the district** by bringing in Olde Towne Coin & Gold, City Body, Ted's Auto Electric, Miller Motors, and the Ninde Street Garage to fill the holes created in the original district plan.

2. **Create a Development Plan.** Polls of neighbors have identified the following targets to be included in that plan:

- Development of South Side Parking
- Dumpster relocation
- Replication of Signal Tower
- Plant trees throughout district
- Kiosks in Plaza, remove street planters, City Park signs, entry signs and more.

3. **Begin collection 2% Ad Valorem Tax** for operating costs and capital improvements. Although this has not been collected since the DDA's organization five years ago, probes have begun through City Hall to put it into effect. Property owners will soon be notified of a public hearing by the City.

4. **Tax Increment Financing.** Funds generated can only be used for capital improvements. Once this is completed and the current assessed values of the properties in the district are determined, that assessed value is frozen. The City, County, schools, etc., continue to receive taxes on this amount. As the assessed values of properties in the district increase, taxes on the difference between the original assessed value and the new assessed value are captured, and can be used by the DDA.



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Historical partying?

Rowdy rich kids at State Universities have thrown "parties" of drunkenness and vandalism with polite nods from politicians and police while poor kids in the ghetto would be arrested and punished with great dispatch for the same infractions.

The following item from *The Warton Echo*, Warton, Ontario, Thursday, October 16, 1902, indicates that the problem is neither new nor local:

"Rampant Rowdism."

On Tuesday night of last week rowdism was rampant in the street and the necessity of an efficient night policeman was abundantly made manifest. A few young fools -- there is no other name by which they can be called -- imbibed so freely of intoxicants that the little atom of common sense which nature provided them with was drowned. To demonstrate their low nature, animal instincts and absence of respectable home training, they made the hours of the night hideous by their drunken orgies, and not content with thus disturbing the peace gave further evidence of their plebeian blood by tearing down various signs, destroying property and incurring expense to respectable citizens. Efforts are being made to discover the perpetrators and the sufferers are offering a substantial reward for information to that end."

-Well said. - ed.

They missed the Heritage Jazz event

Depot Town Association, Inc.
c/o The Old Caboose

I just wanted you to know that my husband and I really missed the Jazz Competition this year. I really enjoy coming to Depot Town for lunch when I'm working in your area. My husband's annual visit was always for the Jazz Competition. We have told many Jackson people about it and many of them attended also.

We never witnessed any trouble - perhaps because we usually left early - before the program finished. Perhaps the beer tent could be closed down earlier, as they do for the Tiger games. Maybe you don't need a beer tent at all.

We hope you find a way to bring this back. It was a wonderful way for new talent to be discovered. We always had a good time in Depot Town!

Sincerely, Wanda Brieger, Jackson

DTA finally pays its bar bill

At the October 12 wrap-up meeting of the Heritage Festival planning committee, DTA's 1989 financial print-out showed almost enough profit to pay its year-overdue kick-back to the Festival. DTA member, Gary McKeever, paid the remaining \$10 out of his own pocket. On to 1990!

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The Depot Town Association, Inc. September, 1989

Guests: Ron Miller, Mike Leach, Tony McCarthy

Treasurer's report: DTA is in the process of reviewing records to determine the amount of sales tax owed to the State of Michigan for 1988 beer sales at jazz and other events.

The insurance audit relating to last year's Frog Island Festival has been reviewed and resolved, resulting in no additional bills or credits to the DTA.

The Caboose is once again covered by liability insurance.

Standing Committees:

Budget/Events - The annual DTA Hallowe'en Party is scheduled for Hallowe'en Night, October 31, at 6 pm. The yearly event features healthful treats, games, and entertainment for the kid in all of us.

The 1989 Frog Island Festival accounts have been closed out with net profits for the DTA in its first collaboration with The Ark. Re-evaluations of our cooperative relationship for the coming years will be ongoing.

DTA requested an updated invoice from the Heritage Festival Committee in order to clear all outstanding accounts.

A letter stating the DTA's intention of using the Freighthouse for a public event has been presented to the City of Ypsilanti in order that they may address issues of accessibility and the continuation of the "Freighthouse Master Plan" development.

Exploratory talks are going on relating to the resumption of DTA's Winter Jazz Series.

N.I.F.T.Y. - Depot Town is appearing on the itinerary of many area visitors, thanks to the efforts of Mary Kerr at the Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce. Tour buses and groups are becoming a common sight.

A brief update: Depot Town will be crawling with The Michigan Art Education Association on Friday, November 17, as they explore and enjoy the neighborhood pubs.

On November 1, Michigan Golfers will be at the Radisson, visiting our city within a city.

Rag Report - The new year will bring a new bill collector as the DTA Treasurer, Judi Monaghan, will replace Rag Editor, Tom Dodd, in accounting for memberships and advertising payments.

Second Vice-presidents:

Foundation - The Foundation will take up where DTA left off, discussing a BIG PROBLEM in the area: Dumpsters.

The Foundation is renewing its registration with the State of Michigan as a registered

nonprofit organization.

Other business:

Tim Wise, with The Mean Bean Restaurant, will be sponsoring a Hallowe'en party for any adults who want to act like kids on Friday, October 27, at the Freighthouse.

Paul Feters estimates that 40 hours of labor and a yet-to-be determined number of bulbs will be needed to restore the holiday brilliance to Depot Town's buildings. Any-one not afraid of heights and willing to

volunteer a few hours can contact Paul at River Artworks at 48 East Cross Street.

A grant of \$25,000 from the City of Ypsilanti to the Recycling Center could help Ypsilanti develop a model program of our recycling alternatives. The program also could save residents \$\$\$ as dumping fees rise and aid in the solution of our unsightly dumpsters all over the world.

The DTA moved to endorse the development of recycling in our community.

The DTA will assume payments on the electricity for the lights in the caboose and the lights on the "Depot Town" sign upon transfer of the billing from the City of Ypsilanti.

The DTA was formally recognized by the American Legion Post 282 for our participation in the city's Fourth of July celebrations.

Depot Town's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is concentrating on augmenting the district itself, aiming for full participation and full benefits for the entire community.

There is a CELEBRITY in our midst. Depot Towner, Dutch Jordan, will be featured in an upcoming episode of Unsolved Mysteries.

Through the default of our nominating committee, Depot Town Association offered a slate of candidates that is beginning to look very familiar:

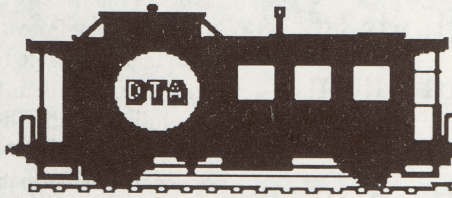
Paul Feters - President
Jacob Guter - Vice-President
Judi Monaghan - Treasurer
Mary Doll - Secretary

The slate was unanimously accepted and voted into office.

Best Yet Award - To new businesses which take the time to learn about their community. A big welcome to Image Photo Lab at 11 East Cross Street.

Golden Goose Award - To the repellant state of Business Dumpsters in Depot Town. You'd better hope that they're not repelling YOUR business.

Adjourned at 9:15 pm.



November 1989

Depot Towners are invited to participate in any or all of the following activities for the good of this old commercial district:

Foundation

8 p.m. Thursday, 11/2
in The Old Caboose

Development Authority (DDA)

7:30 p.m. Thursday, 11/9

Freighthouse Coffee Shop

Merchants

5:15 p.m. Thursday, 11/16

at the Old Town Restaurant

Association

7:30 p.m. Thursday, 11/16

in The Old Caboose

Antique Engine Club

7:00 p.m. Thursday, 11/23

in the Freighthouse Coffee Shop



THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

-Tom Dodd, editor

Depot Town Association, Inc.

Paul Feters, president

c/o The Old Caboose

400 Market Place

Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

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YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

Report Upon Proposed Improvements, forming a basis for a General City Plan

Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, Brookline, Mass. December 31, 1913

The City is traversed by the trunk line of the Michigan Central Railroad and is the terminal point of a branch of the Lake Shore Railroad. Other railroads may enter the City in the future, but the chance of it seems so remote that it need hardly affect any present planning.

In relation to the through traffic of the railroad the main interest of the City is to provide for the ultimate elimination of grade crossings, and, so far as practicable, to secure such conditions along the railroad that the traveling public will receive a positively favorable impression of the City.

So far as concerns railroad traffic having its origin or destination at Ypsilanti the City's concern is in a safe, convenient and agreeable passenger station with satisfactory approaches and surroundings, in convenient and orderly facilities for general freight shipments, and in good rail connections with suitable factory sites.

The worst grade crossings are those at River and Cross Streets near the station and at Forest Street, and the most obvious solution is the raising of the railroad tracks. Not only would this avoid the damage to abutting property that would result from raising the streets, but it would have the material advantage from the railroad point of view of lessening the objectionable gradient by which the railroad now descends into the City. It is important, however, to consider what effect such a track

From Part One of the Study:

The Main Problems and the Methods of Dealing With Them

...

Steam Railroads & Industrial Districts

elevation would have upon the local freight yard and shipping facilities, both in respect to convenience and cost, and also what effect it would have upon the switch tracks which now lead off to the south in the region between

River and Grove Streets and give railroads access to a large body of land well adapted to industrial purposes, including that along the east bank of the river from Congress Street to the water works. This region is flat, it is upon the whole better adapted for industrial use than for residences, it lies on the side of the City away from the prevailing winds and there are industrial establishments, lumberyards, etc., already established there. No solution of the grade crossing problem should be adopted which would interfere with the healthy development

of this region as an industrial section. It ought on the contrary to be carefully fostered. There is also a small area near the railroad west of the river between Forest Street and the Peninsula Mill that is suitable for industrial uses but it is less important than the other, and soon runs into hilly ground. The most possible region for any large future industrial development appears to lie upon the flat upland area east of the present city limits which is now traversed both by the railroad and the interurban electric line to Detroit.

The railroad has made an unusual effort to render the station grounds attractive by planting and this should encourage the City to preserve and improve the naturally beautiful outlook over the river; but the station itself is not very attractive nor commodious and the approach to it from the center of the City is neither agreeable, convenient nor safe.

It may be that the grade crossing elimination cannot be undertaken for some time, but it is of the utmost importance that a carefully studied plan for

"... the station
itself is not very
attractive nor
commodious ..."

it and for all the other changes involved with it should be made at an early date; because until this is done neither the railroad nor the City nor private investors can safely do much toward bettering the existing conditions, and in the absence of any plan new obstacles in the way of the best solution may at any time be thoughtlessly introduced.

Next month: The River and its Shores



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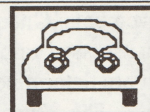
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Front end alignment
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